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Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUWAIT 03501 220422Z

11
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5824
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 3501

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OTRA, KN, KU
SUBJ: REPUBLIC OF KOREA HIGH LEVEL MISSION TO KUWAIT

REF: SEOUL 5451

1. IN LINE WITH REFTEL'S PROJECTED SCHEDULE OF VISITS BY HIGH LEVEL ROK OFFICIALS, FORMER KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER LEE TONG-WON VISITED KUWAIT JULY 17-20. KOREAN TRADE COMMISSIONER RESIDENT IN KUWAIT, WHO ACCOMPANIED LEE TO LENGTHY INTERVEIW WITH KUWAITI CROWN PRINCE/PRIME MINISTER, BRIEFED EMBOFF ON VISIT, MAKING FOLLOWING POINTS.

A. WHILE THE CROWN PRINCE MADE NO FIRM COMMITMENTS TO KOREANS REGARDING KUWAITI VOTING IN UN OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, THE KOREANS VIEWED THE MEETING AS SOMEWHAT OF A "MILESTONE" IN ROK-KUWAIT

RELATIONS, SINCE IT WAS BY FAR THE WARMEST AND MOST FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS TO DATE. KOREANS WERE WELL SATISFIED THAT THE CROWN PRINCE UNDERSTOOD THEIR POSITION, AND HE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE LETTER FROM ROK PRESIDENT PARK (ON ROK POSITION IN UN) WHICH KOREAN EMISSARY DELIVERED TO HIM.
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PAGE 02 KUWAIT 03501 220422Z

B. CROWN PRINCE SEEMED TO BE WELL BRIEFED ON MILITARY SITUA-

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TION ON KOREAN PENINSULA AND ASKED SURPRISINGLY POINTED QUESTIONS ON THIS AND ON REALTIONS BETWEEN TWO KOREAS. MOST OF DISCUSSION STEMMED FROM CROWN-PRINCE'S QUESTIONS ON CHANCES OF WAR ON PENINSULA AND MILITARY POSTURES AND RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO KOREAS.

C. CROWN PRINCE SAID HE WELCOMED EXPANDED KOREAN PARTICIPATION IN KUWAITI ECONOMY, PARTICULARLY IN HOUSING CONSTRUCTION FIELD. (KOREAN TRADE COMMISSIONER TOLD EMBOFF THAT PENDING CONTRACT FOR KOREAN CONSTRUCTION OF 1,850 HOUSING UNITS FOR ABOUT $180 MILLION WAS "IN THE BAG.")

D. KOREANS BELIEVED THEIR STRATEGY OF INFLUENCING GOK POLITICALLY

BY ESTABLISHING STRONG COMMERCIAL CONTACTS AMONG KUWAITI ELITE, INCLUDING SEVERAL CABINET MINISTERS, IS BEGINNING TO PAY OFF, AS EVIDENCED BY WARMTH OF KUWAITI RECEPTION. ALTHOUG FOREIGN MINISTER DID NOT RECEIVE KOREAN EMISSARY, AS IS NORMAL FOR SUCH VISITS, KOREAN'S VIEW THIS CONTINUED GOK PRACTICE AS MERE ILLUSTRATION

OF KUWAITI ARTIFICIAL FACADE AS NON-ALIGNED, "PROGRESSIVE" COUNTRY.

2. KOREAN TRADE COMMISSIONER TOLD EMBOFF THAT ADDITION OF KUWAIT TO LIST OF COUNTRIES TO BE VISITED BY HIGH LEVEL GOK REPRESENTATIVE HAD OCCURED AT LAST MINUTE IN JUNE, AFTER HE ADVISED GOK THAT KUWAIT COULD NOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED ON ISSUE OF VOTING PATTERN ON ROK QUESTION IN UN. HE SAID HE WAS VERY GLAD HIS ADVICE WAS FOLLOWED SINCE EMISSARY'S VISIT COULD SERVE ROK WELL NOT ONLY ON UN MATTER, BUT ON OTHER ISSUES AS WELL.
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